



Montana Library Association
From the Mountains to the Prairies



DRAFT

2021 Legislative Session

LEGISLATIVE PACKET

Montana State Library

Montana Library Association

DRAFT

Short Title:	Study broadband needs and solutions for the State of Montana
Date:	10/9/2020

Legislator(s)

Sponsor

Contact Information

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Whereas, access to broadband internet is necessary to participate in many facets of daily life including the need to learn online, to apply for jobs, to work remotely, and to communicate with medical providers; and,

Whereas, access to broadband internet is limited or unavailable in many areas of Montana; and

Whereas, the cost of broadband internet may not be affordable to many Montanans; and

Whereas, opportunities to grow the economy of the State of Montana and to compete with nationally in a variety of economic sectors are negatively impacted by the lack of broadband internet; and

Whereas, the federal government makes millions of dollars available for broadband deployment that Montana could leverage; and

Whereas, the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the significance of the digital divide that exists between those Montanans who have access to broadband internet, and those who do not; and

(Additional whereas clauses as appropriate)

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA: that the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, to:

- 1) evaluate existing data with regard to the availability of and access to broadband internet;
- 2) develop consensus for Montana's broadband goals;
- 3) consider models for broadband oversight and legislation to ensure Montana achieves its broadband goals;
- 4) encourage opportunities for public/private partnerships to maximize private sector investment to support broadband deployment;
- 5) understand the costs associated with adequate broadband investment and opportunities to leverage existing funding sources;
- 6) ensure that Montanans fully realize the potentials afforded to them through a robust broadband internet infrastructure and digital literacy initiatives;
- 7) solicit and consider comments, concerns, and suggestions from all interested stakeholder groups, including but not limited to the Montana Library Association, the Office of Public Instruction, the Commission of Higher Education, the Montana Telecommunications Association, the Montana Economic Developers Association, counties, tribes, school districts; and

- 8) if appropriate, develop a committee bill to propose legislation to provide solutions that address the broadband needs of the State of Montana

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study be concluded prior to September 15, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 68th Legislature.

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Executive Summary

Short Title: Study broadband needs and solutions for the State of Montana

1. **Synopsis:** Lack of adequate broadband is a significant barrier to Montana’s current economy, and educational system, and if left unresolved, will stimy future growth for our State. If successfully passed and prioritized, this legislation would result in a study that would concretely assess and address the broadband needs for Montana.
2. **Fiscal Impact:** Yes No Uncertain
3. **Opposition Expected:** Yes No Uncertain

Interest Group	Position	Comments
Montana Library Association	Support	
Montana Economic Developers Association	Please Select	
Montana Telecommunications Association	Please Select	
Cooperatives/Providers	Please Select	
Charter Spectrum	Please Select	
Office of Public Instruction	Please Select	
Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education	Please Select	
Montana Association of Counties	Please Select	
League of Cities and Towns	Please Select	
School Administrators of Montana	Please Select	
Tribal representatives	Please Select	

4. Contact Person(s):

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Questions & Answers

Short Title: Study broadband needs and solutions for the State of Montana

Question	Answer
Notable Legislative History	

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